UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/666,859	09/21/2000	Masahiko Murakami	1405.1026/JDH	5944

21171 7590 05/12/2004		EXAMINER	
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1201 NEW YORK AVENUE, N.W.		ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
WASHINGTON, DC 20005		2154	5

DATE MAILED: 05/12/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

PTO-90C (Rev. 10/03)

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE <u>3</u> MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.
- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
  Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on <u>31 March 2004</u>.
2a)☒ This action is **FINAL**.   2b)☐ This action is non-final.
3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) <u>1-13</u> is/are pending in the application.
    4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
6)☒ Claim(s) <u>1-13</u> is/are rejected.
7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
10)☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.
    Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
    Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
11)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
    a)☒ All   b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:
      1.☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
      2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
      3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
    * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1)☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2)☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3)☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
    Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.

4)☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
    Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
5)☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6)☐ Other: _____.

1.   This action is responsive to the amendment and remarks filed on March 31, 2004.

2.   Claims 1-13 are presented for examination.

3.   The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. code not included in this office action can be

found in a prior office action.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC 103

4.   The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all

obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in
> section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are
> such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person
> having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the
> manner in which the invention was made.

5.   Claims 1-2, 4 and 12-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over

Gruen, U.S. Patent 6,393,460 (hereinafter Gruen) in view of Sciammarella el al, U.S. Patent

5,982,369 (hereinafter Sciammarella).

6.   Gruen was cited in the last office action.

7.   As per claim 1, Gruen taught the invention substantially as claimed in a chat system

structured to include chat devices connected to a network and which share virtual chat spaces

configured on said network and which can send and receive messages among themselves (col. 1,

lines 15-30), comprising:

> associating and preparing specific keywords with specific keyword categories (col. 7,
>
> lines 1-7);
>
> specifying said keyword categories wherein at lease one of said keywords are included in
>
> messages sent or received in a virtual space (col. 7, lines 14-19);
>
> associating and storing said keywords and said keyword categories with virtual space
>
> identifiers of said virtual spaces in which messages are sent or received (col. 3, lines 6-
>
> 11; col. 7, lines 47-50);
>
> calculating virtual space characteristics of said virtual spaces based on said keyword
>
> categories associated with the virtual spaces, the virtual space characteristics including a
>
> tabulation of relevance points associated with at least one of the keyword categories (col.
>
> 5, lines 24-col. 6, lines 16; col. 7, lines 26-30, 40-44); and
>
> reporting said virtual space characteristics to users by displaying at least one of a
>
> keyword category having a highest tabulation of relevance points (52, fig. 1; col. 3, lines
>
> 16-20; col. 6,lines 50-57; col. 7, lines 47-51).

8.   Gruen did not teach displaying a list of relevance point tabulation associated with

keyword categories. Sciammarella taught displaying at least one of a keyword category having a

highest tabulation of relevance points and a list of relevance point tabulations associated with a

plurality of the keyword categories (col. 1, lines 31-43).

9.   It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the

invention was made to combine the teachings of Gruen and Sciammarella because

Sciammarella's method of displaying a list of relevance points tabulations associated with

keyword categories would increase the user alertness of Gruen's system by allowing users to

easily analyze relevancy associated with each of the multiple categories.

10.   As per claims 2 and 12-13, Gruen taught the invention substantially as claimed in a chat

system structured to include chat devices connected to a network and which share virtual chat

spaces configured on said network and which can send and receive messages among themselves

(col. 1, lines 15-30), comprising:

> a category table for associating and storing specific keywords with specific keyword
>
> categories (col. 3, lines 6-11; col. 6, lines 50-67; col. 7, lines 1-7);
>
> a virtual space table for associating and storing virtual space identifiers, said keywords
>
> sent into said virtual spaces, and said keyword categories (col. 3, lines 6-11; col. 7, lines
>
> 47-50);
>
> a control means for reading said keyword categories from said category table and for
>
> writing to the virtual space table said virtual space identifiers of said virtual spaces into
>
> which at least one of said keywords were sent, said keywords, and said keyword
>
> categories wherein a message sent into virtual space is acquired from said chat system

and said message includes at least one of said keywords (col. 6, lines 33-67; col. 7, lines

45-65);

a decision means for calculating virtual space characteristics of said virtual space based

on said keyword categories associated with the virtual spaces, the virtual space

characteristics including a tabulation of relevance points associated with at least one of

the keyword categories (col. 5, lines 24-col. 6, lines 16; col. 7, lines 26-30, 40-44); and

an output means for outputting said characteristics of said virtual spaces by displaying at

least one of a keyword category having a highest tabulation of relevance points and a list

of relevance point tabulations associated with a plurality of the keyword categories (52,

fig. 1; col. 3, lines 16-20; col. 6,lines 50-57; col. 7, lines 47-51).

11.   Gruen did not teach displaying a list of relevance point tabulation associated with

keyword categories. Sciammarella taught displaying at least one of a keyword category having a

highest tabulation of relevance points and a list of relevance point tabulations associated with a

plurality of the keyword categories (col. 1, lines 31-43).

12.   It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the

invention was made to combine the teachings of Gruen and Sciammarella because

Sciammarella's method of displaying a list of relevance points tabulations associated with

keyword categories would increase the user alertness of Gruen's system by allowing users to

easily analyze relevancy associated with each of the multiple categories.

13.   As per claim 4, Gruen and Sciammarella taught the invention substantially as claimed in

claim 2 above. Gruen further taught wherein

    said communication support system is additionally provided with a message volume

    storage means for storing message volume determined form a volume of messages sent

    form chat devices for each virtual space (col. 5, lines 24-col. 6, lines 16); and

    said decision means calculates said virtual space characteristics based on said keyword

    categories sent by chat devices in accordance with said message volume of chat devices

    in said virtual spaces (col. 5, lines 24-col. 6, lines 16).

14.   Claims 3 and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gruen

and Sciammarella in view of Ito el al, U.S. Patent 6,564,244 (hereinafter Ito).

15.   Ito was cited in the last office action.

16.   As per claim 3, Gruen and Sciammarella taught the invention substantially as claimed in

claim 2 above. Gruen further taught wherein said virtual space table associates and stores said

virtual space identifiers, keywords and keyword categories at which said keywords were sent

into said virtual spaces (col. 3, lines 6-11; col. 6, lines 50-67; col. 7, lines 47-50);

17.   Gruen and Sciammarella did not teach the step of said control means and the step of said

decision means include said keyword message times. Ito taught the communication support

system wherein

said control means additionally acquires said message times of said messages including keywords from said chat system and writes said keyword message times to said virtual space table (col. 3, lines 7-8); and

said decision means calculates said virtual space characteristics based on said keyword categories in accordance with chat volume in said virtual space from a message time until a specified time has elapsed (col. 3, lines 47-55).

18.   It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to combine the teachings of Gruen, Sciammarella and Ito because Ito's system of including said keyword message times would increase the alertness of the user in Gruen's and Sciammarella's systems by providing the recording means for users to track when a keyword message search is satisfied (col. 3, lines 9-24).

19.   As per claim 11, Gruen and Sciammarella taught the invention substantially as claimed in claim 2 above.   Gruen and Sciammarella did not teach deleting said keyword and said keyword categories from said virtual space table. Ito taught wherein said control means additionally acquires a message time of a message that includes at least one of said keyword from said chat system, and additionally writes said message time to said virtual space table, and deletes said keywords and keyword categories form said virtual space table wherein a specified time has elapsed since said message time (col. 10, lines 61-65).

20.   It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the

invention was made to combine the teachings of Gruen, Sciammarella and Ito because Ito's

system of deleting said keywords and keyword categories form said virtual space table would

increase the efficiency in Gruen's and Sciammarella's systems by providing a reduction of

resources by configuring the communication support system so that the state of the channel is

recorded for a fix period of time (col. 2, lines 47-52, 59-60).

21.   Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gruen and

Sciammarella in view of Trovato el al, U.S. Patent 6,425,012 (hereinafter Trovato).

22.   Trovato was cited in the last office action.

23.   As per claim 5, Gruen and Sciammarella taught the invention substantially as claimed in

claim 2 above. Gruen and Sciammarella did not teach the communication support system is

additionally provided with a channel entry time storage means. Trovato taught wherein said

communication support system is additionally provided with a channel entry time storage means

for storing said entry time a chat device entered a virtual space for each virtual space (col. 3,

lines 11-38; col. 4, lines 13-17); and

       said decision means calculates said virtual space characteristics based on said keyword

categories sent by chat devices in accordance with said entry times said chat devices remain in

said virtual spaces (col. 3, lines 11-38; col. 4, lines 13-17).

24.   It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the

invention was made to combine the teachings of Gruen, Sciammarella and Trovato because

Trovato's system of including channel entry time would increase the likelihood of determining

the characteristic of said virtual space in Gruen's and Sciammarella's systems by using the entry

time as a parameter to determine the specific topic of said virtual space (col. 2, lines 1-7, 19-22).

25.   Claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gruen and

Sciammarella in view of Brown el al, U.S. Patent 5,941,947 (hereinafter Brown).

26.   Brown was cited in the last office action.

27.   As per claim 6, Gruen and Sciammarella taught the invention substantially as claimed in

claim 2 above. Gruen and Sciammarella did not teach acquiring the specific right of the chat

device. Brown taught wherein said decision means acquires specific rights that a chat device has

in regard to a virtual space form the chat system (col. 2, lines 32-36; col. 3, lines 26-30; col. 2,

lines 66-col. 3, lines 11).

28.   It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the

invention was made to combine the teachings of Gruen, Sciammarella and Brown because

Brown's system of acquiring the rights of a chat device in regard to a virtual space would

increase the flexibility of Gruen's and Sciammarella's systems by controlling the rights of chat

device in order to achieve a variety of objectives (col. 4, lines 66-col. 5, lines 2).

29. Claim 7 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gruen and

Sciammarella in view of Bradshaw et al, U.S. Patent 6,065,056 (hereinafter Bradshaw).

30. Bradshaw was cited in the last office action.

31. As per claim 7, Gruen and Sciammarella taught the invention substantially as claimed in

claim 2 above. Gruen and Sciammarella did not teach said decision means of comparing said

virtual spaces characteristics and a keyword category. Bradshaw taught wherein said decision

means compares said virtual spaces characteristics and a keyword category and decides whether

or not to report a message to other chat devices wherein said message including a keyword is

sent from a chat device into a virtual space (col. 3, lines 66-col. 4, lines 4; col. 4, lines 28-32; col.

6, lines 7-9; col. 11, lines 34-36); and

said chat system sends the message in accordance with said decision (col. 3, lines 66-col.

4, lines 4; col. 4, lines 28-32; col. 6, lines 7-9; col. 11, lines 34-36).

32. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the

invention was made to combine the teachings of Gruen, Sciammarella and Bradshaw because

Bradshaw's means of reporting a message by comparing the virtual space characteristics and a

keyword category would enhanced Gruen's and Sciammarella's systems by providing

notification over the content of the virtual space by the keyword category in a textual application

(col. 2, lines 47-49).

33.   Claims 8-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gruen,

Sciammarella and Bradshaw in view of Cottrille et al, U.S. Patent 6,076,100 (hereinafter

Cottrille).

34.   Cottrille was cited in the last office action.

35.   As per claims 8 and 10, Gruen, Sciammarella and Bradshaw taught the invention

substantially as claimed in claim 7 above. Gruen, Sciammarella and Bradshaw did not teach

means to expel a chat device. Cottrille taught wherein decision means instructs the chat system

to expel a chat device that sent an unsuitable message from a virtual space upon deciding that

said message will not be reported to other chat devices (col. 5, lines 37-47; col. 7, lines 27-40);

and

> said chat system expels said chat device that sent said message form said virtual space in
>
> accordance with said instruction (col. 5, lines 37-47; col. 7, lines 27-40).

36.   It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the

invention was made to combine the teachings of Gruen, Sciammarella, Bradshaw and Cottrille

because Cottrille's system of expelling the chat device would improved the security in Gruen's,

Sciammarella's and Bradshaw's systems by monitoring the topic of the conversation and by

providing the ability to apply penalties to improper user of chat device (col.1, lines 14-25).

37.   As per claim 9, Cottrille further taught wherein said decision means additionally has a

blacklist that records chat devices that sent unsuitable messages wherein said decision means

decided that said messages would not be reported to other chat devices (col. 7, lines 11-26),

said decision means decides that said messages will not be reported to other chat devices

wherein the sending sources of said message acquired from the chat system are included

on said blacklist (col. 7, lines 11-26).

38.   Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-13, filed 3/31/04, have been fully

considered but are not deemed to be persuasive and are moot in view of the new grounds of

rejection.

39.   In the remark applicant argued that

(1)   Gruen does not teach or suggest displaying "virtual space characteristics

including a tabulation of relevance points associated with at least one of a plurality of

keyword categories.

40.   In response to point (1), Gruen taught the virtual space characteristics including a

tabulation of relevance points associated with at least one of the keyword categories (col. 5, lines

24-col. 6, lines 16; col. 7, lines 26-30, 40-44); and reporting said virtual space characteristics to

users by displaying at least one of a keyword category having a highest tabulation of relevance

points (52, fig. 1; col. 3, lines 16-20; col. 6,lines 50-57; col. 7, lines 47-51).

41.   Gruen did not teach displaying a list of relevance point tabulation associated with

keyword categories. Sciammarella taught displaying at least one of a keyword category having a

highest tabulation of relevance points and a list of relevance point tabulations associated with a

plurality of the keyword categories (col. 1, lines 31-43).

42.   It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the

invention was made to combine the teachings of Gruen and Sciammarella because

Sciammarella's method of displaying a list of relevance points tabulations associated with

keyword categories would increase the user alertness of Gruen's system by allowing users to

easily analyze relevancy associated with each of the multiple categories.

43.   **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time

policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

44.   A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE

MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO

MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after

the end of the THREE MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period

will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR

1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however,

will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this

final action.

45.   Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications form the

examiner should be directed to Philip Lee whose telephone number is (703) 305-7721.

46.   Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application should be

directed to the Group receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 305-9600.

Philip Lee

May 5, 2004

JOHN FOLLANSBEE
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